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Inaugural Address of Adlai
E. Stevenson, Governor
of Illinois
10 January 1949

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY.



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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

of

ADLAI E. STEVENSON

Governor of Illinois

JANUARY 10 • 1949

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of

GOVERNOR ADLAI E. STEVENSON

OF ILLINOIS

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DELIVERED

BEFORE A JOINT SESSION

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY of ILLINOIS

at SPRINGFIELD

+

JANUARY 10, 1949

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, GOVERNOR AND MRS. GREEN AND
FELLOW CITIZENS:

Every Governor of Illinois has tried, I suppose, to make his inaugural address brief. Few have succeeded. I, too, have tried, and failed, even though I have reserved for future comment many subjects deserving discussion.

I cannot fail, however, to note the significance and perhaps the historical opportunity for you and me in this hour when Illinois is passing from one epoch to another exactly as it did 100 years ago.

Historians say that 1848 was a transition year in the history of Illinois. A steel plow to cut the tough sod had, at last, been invented. The reaper had come to our prairies. Plank roads had begun to lift Illinois out of the mud. The Germans and the Irish were coming. With 25,000 souls, Chicago was struggling out of the swamps. A railroad was creeping westward. Illinois was emerging from the log cabin frontier era and was taking its place in the new industrial day that was breaking upon the Union.

Illinois was to meet the test of a century ago. It was to become a pillar of strength and a progressive leader in the sisterhood of States. Behind vast barriers of sea and land, Illinois grew to maturity relatively remote and aloof from world affairs.

Today, Illinois stands at the threshold of another era—an era in which almost any event in any part of the world can have immediate and profound impact upon us. Barriers of time and space no longer isolate or protect us. And to a degree hitherto undreamed, events in America have prompt repercussions around the globe. Many watch us intently. Our mistakes, our failures, all are quickly exploited by those who watch with malice. But more watch with prayers.

Two convulsive conflicts have made our revolutionary generation the bloodiest in the history of man. And now with the post war period of gay optimism ending, the world settles down

to a long trial of strength between individualism and collectivism—a trial of strength not limited to military and economic potentials but to moral and spiritual actualities.

Will Illinois in this new era take the leadership that it took in the materialistic era of the past hundred years? We can if we will it. We who meet here in Springfield today can take a long step toward making our government a model, a precept in the best tradition of self government. The forces of progress are at hand. In the century that stretches back to the log cabin door, nature, agriculture, industry, learning, and an energetic, diverse population have combined to bless us, enrich us, enlighten us. Nothing can stop us unless it be our own moral inadequacy, greed, selfishness, prejudice, excessive partisanship.

We are here, chosen by the people, not as party agents but as the peoples' agents. A common concern for the future unites us. A common desire to serve the state unites us. Political parties and party principles are essential to our system of government, but economic and social principles upon which a healthy electorate divides, diminish in importance as government descends from the national to the local level. Basic divisions between Democrats and Republicans on national issues have little bearing upon state or municipal problems. Mere partisan struggle for advantage will serve neither party nor state, because where you, as legislators of Illinois, and I as Governor of Illinois, now stand, it is only performance that will count.

I would not be misunderstood as to the role that Illinois can take in this titanic struggle for the future that plagues the world. What Illinois can and must do is to make itself the strongest link in that mighty chain which we call the United States.

We can set our own house in order. We can hearten our countrymen; we can demonstrate for all to see that representative government is healthy, vigorous, enterprising; that representative government is the best government. We can show the world what a government consecrated to plain talk, hard work and prairie horse-sense can do.

In accordance with the Constitution and tradition I shall today make a few suggestions calculated, I think, to put our house in order.

STATE AND LOCAL FINANCES

Let's assess first our basic problem. With the many new services which modern civilization demands of government revenue is the basic problem, because the amount of money available to do a given job determines how the job is done.

We must bear in mind that the period of manpower and material shortage of the war years when many services and expenditures of government were necessarily curtailed is now over. Instead of an opportunity to accumulate excess revenues we now have an accumulation of imperative demands for capital improvements and services at greatly increased cost.

The state's taxing system is today producing revenue at the unprecedented rate of approximately 450 million dollars a year. But some of the major taxes are earmarked for special expenditure programs. Federal grants add about 75 million dollars a year, but these grants are also earmarked. As my predecessor, Governor Green, said to you last week, we have an unencumbered balance of about 100 million dollars in the State Treasury after allowing for anticipated deficiency appropriations and all legal or moral commitments.

→) On the other side of the ledger our bonded debt is 466 million dollars, the second largest of any state in the union. Moreover, to operate those state functions which are not financed from earmarked sources, we are now spending at a rate in excess of our income. Recent estimates show that expenditures of non-reserved funds in this fiscal year will exceed revenues by some 40 million dollars.

This is the background against which we must assess the obligations of our state to its citizens. Many school units are hard pressed despite increased property taxes. Many face increasing enrollments with inadequate buildings. Low salaries make it difficult to recruit and retain the best teachers. Likewise municipalities quite generally face grave difficulties in maintaining their essential services.

The people are impatient with bickering between the state and local governments over the division of duties and revenues. They look only for efficient and responsible government by whatever agency is best fitted. As taxpayers, they are entitled

to a governmental structure both state and local which will insure the most economical administration of all government services. There is no justification for preserving the frills and extravagances of one government when the functions of other governments within the boundaries of the same state have been reduced beyond the minimums of common welfare. The citizens of the towns and school districts of this state are also the citizens of the state. We want no feast within our borders when there is also famine.

The problems of all governments in Illinois are the concern, indeed the major concern, of the state. Consistent with maintaining the state's credit and discharging its own prior responsibilities for the general welfare, our greatest single challenge lies in finding the means for better financing of schools, roads and local services. To shoulder this heavier responsibility certainly it is our obligation to squeeze the water and the waste out of governments at every level. Before imposing additional state taxes, certainly it is our obligation to enforce completely and effectively those we already have.

A greater participation in the financing of local government requires that the state demand economical and efficient local government. I do not think that state funds should be used to perpetuate structures that can not do an economical and effective job of good administration. But for well-organized local units the state should relax restrictions for its aid so as to insure the maximum of local initiative and responsibility in the management of local affairs.

The able Revenue Commission appointed by the 65th General assembly, of which Senator Merritt J. Little is chairman, will shortly make detailed recommendations to you concerning these basic problems of revenue and state aid. I anticipate that its conclusions will reflect its concern for our best interests and will be made with a vision which transcends fleeting political considerations.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Directly related to the problem of revenue, and to other road blocks to better government is, of course, the Constitution of 1870.

I cannot now describe in detail all of its impediments. But everyone knows that uniformity of taxation of property, commanded in 1870 when land was the principal form of wealth, is impossible today. We avoid compliance by individual and official evasion and subterfuge. The price we pay is an inequitable taxing system with real estate carrying a disproportionate share of the burden, and a serious breakdown in respect for law. Irreverence for constitutions threatens the foundations of constitutional government itself.

The flat constitutional command of legislative reapportionment every ten years has not been complied with since 1901. Realistically, I apprehend that it is not going to be complied with so long as reapportionment would give control of both houses of the General Assembly to Cook County, as it would under the present Constitution. And in the meantime there is practical disenfranchisement of a very large number of citizens. 2

The present constitutional limitation on municipal indebtedness has resulted in a proliferation of local governments which increases costs, diffuses responsibility and hampers effective control of government by the people. 3

The rigid constitutional pattern for the administration of the state's justice has resulted in a complex, unbusinesslike judicial establishment. 4

The hands of the legislature are tied in many respects by detailed unnecessary constitutional legislation. To use Governor Lowden's words of 32 years ago: "To withhold necessary power from a public official because he may abuse it, is to confess the failure of our form of government."

Experience has demonstrated virtual impossibility of revising the Constitution by the process of piecemeal amendment. The need, therefore, is to assemble a constitutional convention to deal with the problems, promptly and comprehensively.

Accordingly, I request the General Assembly to adopt a joint resolution submitting to a referendum the question whether a constitutional convention shall be called. I am confident that the General Assembly will afford our people the opportunity to express themselves on this important question.

But legislative action alone is not enough. We must over-

come those obstacles which have combined to defeat so many past efforts to revise our Constitution.

The fear so frequently expressed that a new constitution will permit a graduated income tax or turn over to Cook County domination of the legislature is probably the best assurance that the convention will refrain from doing so.

I know of no large number of our people who favor a state income tax. I know a great many who oppose it. Rather than risk the rejection of a new constitution because of this apprehension I would urge the convention to leave the income tax problem precisely where it stands at present.

I do not believe that Cook County wants legislative dominance in both houses. Even if Cook County wanted that dominance it could not get it in a constitutional convention, for there the distribution of voting strength as between Cook County and downstate would be precisely the same as in the General Assembly. The problem of achieving a balance of legislative power is neither novel nor complex. It was solved in our federal system and it has been solved in the constitutions of other states.

Other objections will be raised to a constitutional convention. Some will oppose it because of the ensuing uncertainties of interpretation, or because of the fear that hard won gains and advantages will be lost. At best this is going far afield to borrow trouble; at worst it is according the convenience of the few precedence over the welfare of the many.

In the past political parties in Illinois have laid aside partisan differences in the consideration of basic constitutional issues. A vigorous non-partisan effort is again imperative. The support of interested groups must be enlisted. And I hope you will change our election laws and restore to political parties the responsibility for constitutional issues which the men who wrote the Constitution of 1870 contemplated they should have.

I firmly believe that if we approach the task of revising our Constitution in the manner I have outlined, our people will not fear or mistrust a constitutional convention and that such a convention, when assembled, will approach its responsibilities in the solemn spirit of retaining all that is of proven value while adapting our fundamental law to the needs of the present day.

PERSONNEL

Government, however good the laws, will not rise above the quality of the men that comprise it. Administration will be no better than the administrators. Revitalizing public service can't be achieved with good intentions and elocution about good government. The conditions of good morale are a sense of mission, self respect and dignity.

The problem of personnel administration in a business spending half a billion dollars a year merits the closest attention of you, the board of directors, and of us, your executive officers. It will have mine, I assure you.

Meanwhile let me comment on three aspects of the personnel problem. In the first place, responsibilities of this magnitude demand highly competent and scrupulous men at the top. It is obvious to all that many of the senior positions in the state's service do not pay enough to support, let alone attract the quality of management and leadership these positions demand and the people deserve, except upon a basis of unselfish sacrifice. And too often, as many have noted, the reward for sacrifice in public service is not gratitude in lieu of dollars, but abuse, criticism and ingratitude. Government cannot, will not, and should not attempt to match the salary scales of private business. But government can and must, if it is to be good government, pay salaries which are not an invitation to carelessness, indolence or even worse—corruption. And in good government, good men will find their supplementary reward in personal satisfaction, public esteem and respect.

I will propose, therefore, while you are considering general salary levels, substantial increases in the salaries of key positions.

In the second place, competent and incorruptible men at the top are not enough. It is the men and women in the ranks who translate legislation and executive policy into action, who give government its meaning and character. In a real sense they *are* the government. And its quality depends not on the majestic buildings symbolic of the power and dignity of government but upon the spirit and competence of these people who *are* the government.

These employees of the state are not employees of a political party. They must not be so considered.

Today the major emphasis in civil service administration is on recruiting, training and promoting the best possible body of men and women to administer the public business. I have carefully considered whether, in view of our lack of progress in this most important field, I should urge you to consider the adoption of a more modern system of personnel administration to secure the necessary emphasis upon recruitment and training aspects of a genuine merit system.

I have concluded, however, that a sincere effort must first be made to achieve progress under our present machinery. One significant legislative change is essential, however. The function of position classification is an integral part of personnel administration, and I urge the General Assembly to restore that function to the Civil Service Commission where it belongs.

In the third place, the modern goal of government is career service. Too large a segment of our employees are political transients rather than career servants. Ideally a change of administration should mean a change in policy-making personnel only. Hard, practical considerations point to the same goal. Current appropriations for personnel service are some one hundred million dollars a year. The prudent expenditure of such a sum for the best possible public service imposes a grave responsibility upon the General Assembly and the Governor.

I have no illusions that progress in this field will be easy. But I know that the patronage system of the past is inefficient because effective administration is impossible when employees owe their allegiance and responsibility not to their supervisors but to their political sponsors. And I know that the system is even of diminishing political value as the electorate finds it more and more distasteful. Witness the last election in Illinois.

I believe sincerely that we are sufficiently mature to encourage the policy of career service and an expanding merit system in Illinois.

Incidentally the phrase "the government of Illinois belongs to the people of Illinois" has too often been abused by empty lip service. A healthy antidote to payroll padding and familiar political practices would be to invite constant public scrutiny

of payroll facts and figures. The policy of my administration will be to require as complete and current payroll information as is feasible and looking to the future I urge the adoption of legislation expressing that policy.

PUBLIC WELFARE AND ASSISTANCE

Public welfare is perhaps our most moving and urgent problem. During the early stages when we were setting up assistance programs for dependent children, the aged and the handicapped, we developed a two-headed organization to provide welfare services and assistance, frequently at the same time to the same people. It duplicates procedures and costs, and provides a double standard which affects salaries and methods of operation.

We have now had a broad experience in this field. I believe that by integrating the related services of the Illinois Public Aid Commission and the Department of Public Welfare into a single unit, we shall achieve not only economies and increased efficiency but better service to the citizen who does not want two, three, or four agencies visiting his home. I urge that legislation effecting this integration be adopted.

I also recommend for the director of this much enlarged department a strong advisory and policy approving board.

Our dependent children, our old people, our handicapped and mentally ill whose welfare would be entrusted to this single department will in the future as in the past merit our first attention on humane grounds and also because such a large segment of the state's dollar will be allocated to their care.

I assume the General Assembly will wish to proceed promptly by emergency legislation to increase aid to those for whom the last Congress made additional provision. The old age pensioners, and the blind are in need of this additional aid which will increase maximum payments under old age assistance to at least fifty-five dollars a month.

In this connection I believe the legislature should also give consideration to providing pension payments for the aged and blind solely on basis of need and without arbitrary maximum. Ceilings other than the need of the recipients have been eliminated for old age pensions in one-fourth of the states and

made subject to administrative change in an equal number of jurisdictions.

The population of our mental institutions is growing at an alarming rate. The deficiencies in their accommodations, care and treatment are well known. So is the appalling cost of new building on a scale to meet the demand. So also is the dearth of competent trained personnel to properly staff existing facilities, let alone large additional facilities.

Humanity, prudence and good sense compel us to attack this problem all along the line. Fire hazards, structural and sanitary deficiencies endanger the well-being and even the lives of too many of our wards and must be eliminated. The building program to enlarge our capacity and reduce pitiful overcrowding in some of our hospitals and to replace obsolete units cannot be deferred. Moreover the population of our mental institutions which now exceeds 40,000 can and should, I think, be reduced. Many of these patients are merely aged and infirm or senile. They do not need elaborate psychiatric and nursing care. Segregation with proper custodial facilities and care should both cost less and provide more humane care. Others could be discharged and maintained in their own or foster homes with the aid of old age pensions. Still other patients could be discharged and maintained at home, treated and cared for through local agencies under the supervision of the State.

And to arrest the rapid increase in the mental hospital population we must also find ways and means of providing that treatment before hospitalization is necessary. With proper early treatment in their own communities many tragic souls could have remained in their homes and lived useful lives.

Too often the easiest way has been to commit people to institutions. Added to the human tragedy of hurrying merely distressing cases off to institutions is the ever-mounting long-term cost of institutional care, whereas these same people would get along better in their own communities and with proper treatment many would recover.

So I am suggesting a shift of emphasis from state hospitalization to home care. This will require time and the assistance of the ablest authorities in the fields of health and welfare. It will require the mobilization of all our public and private re-

sources. It will involve a change in our philosophy and attitude toward these victims of troubled minds in a troubled world, with less emphasis on institutional care and more on prevention and clinical treatment.

This is but the pattern of a beginning, but a beginning must be made to conserve useful human life and control the cost of institutional care.

In the service of helpless people we have a special responsibility for the careful selection of personnel. To attract doctors, nurses, social workers and skilled attendants we will have to give unmistakable proof of our determination to establish an attractive career service in public welfare in Illinois for those who have a sincere urge to help the less fortunate.

LABOR

Our position as one of the leading industrial regions of the world underscores our responsibility for enlightened leadership in protecting the welfare of labor. That the role of a state in labor legislation is less dramatic than the role of the national government, makes it no less important. In fact the foundation of the safety and welfare of the worker rests on state legislation. The gains already made must not be impaired, and the foundation requires constant re-examination to insure its adequacy.

Accordingly, it is necessary that you review again the adequacy of workmen's compensation awards in the light of the increased living costs of the injured workman. And it is imperative that I insure scrupulous and disinterested administration of a law which is of such critical importance to the workman and his employer.

The maximum benefits payable under our unemployment compensation act were last adjusted in 1944. The purpose of this legislation is to enable the unemployed worker to continue to purchase the necessities of life. Increases in wage scales and living costs since 1944 have obliterated the correlation between earnings and unemployment benefits which are now insufficient to cover non-postponable necessities.

Our statute extends the benefits of unemployment compensation only to workers in establishments which employ more than six employees. Twenty-seven states, employing more than

60% of all the workers covered by unemployment compensation have extended their coverage to establishments employing less than six, without, apparently, encountering serious administrative difficulties. I urge you to consider this matter with other legislative adjustments in the field of unemployment compensation.

Here too, there are problems for the executive as well as for the legislature. The importance of security to workers, the heavy cost to employers, the volume of claims presented—all combine to demand the utmost administrative care to protect our unemployment compensation system against abuse by officials as well as undeserving claimants.

When the employment service was restored to the state at the end of the war, Illinois separated the related functions of unemployment compensation and the free employment service. Experience has shown that this separation impedes efficient service and I recommend corrective legislation to permit close coordination of these functions.

While I think weekly benefits payable to unemployed workers should be raised, consideration should also be given to a reduction of employer contribution rates taking into account the present size of the fund and the potential need for funds in the foreseeable future.

I trust that when the legislature is considering unemployment compensation it will also explore the related question of temporary disability insurance.

I also ask you to consider the advisability of enacting legislation to enable the State to take an affirmative role in the settlement of labor disputes. The Federal government has, of course, its Mediation and Conciliation Service which participates in most labor disputes. Many states have such agencies, some successful and some unsuccessful. While I do not expect spectacular achievements from a state agency operating in this field, there may be a useful place for a state agency, operating on a modest budget with the cooperation of industry and labor, to render useful public service. I believe the possibility should be explored.

I should like to urge your consideration of a subject which,

while it is connected with labor, has even broader implications. I refer to Fair Employment Practices legislation. The ideals we so proudly proclaim cannot be reconciled with economic discrimination upon racial or religious grounds. To fall short of our professed ideals today, and in this field, has implications of hypocrisy and insincerity we dare not disregard. The eyes of the world are riveted upon our democracy. Prejudices can no longer find safe refuge in rationalizations. How we deal with this subject is intimately related to the world wide conflict of ideologies which is the battle for tomorrow.

Moreover it is obvious that only as new opportunities for employment are opened will those now at a disadvantage be able to help themselves. I earnestly bespeak your thoughtful consideration of legislation to that end and toward the solution of one of our most difficult problems.

HIGHWAYS

I have mentioned the formidable needs of our schools, of the distressed local governments and of our welfare institutions. Governor Green said to you last week: "One of the principal functions of modern state governments is the maintenance and improvement of highways." And I might add that it is also one of the most expensive. But good highways, country roads and city streets are no longer a luxury or a convenience; they have become essential to our agricultural and industrial economy.

We already have an enormous investment in our highway system. We face an even larger investment to conserve what we have already invested and to improve and reconstruct our highways. Consistent with other urgent demands for capital improvements and with an eye to the timing of public construction work in prosperity and depression, we must have the courage to adopt and initiate a long-range program suitable to our needs.

The 65th General Assembly created a commission to study the whole problem of highway traffic, construction and financing with a view to recommending a long-range highway program. Its report will be submitted to you by March 1.

If it is based, as I think it will be, on truth rather than conjecture, on demonstrable need rather than expediency; if it meets conflicts between political practice and public interest

with courage and realism, I confidently believe that we will unite on its adoption. And I assure you that this administration will strive to execute it with honesty, non-partisanship and relentless determination to accomplish the maximum improvement of our highway system within the desire and ability of the people to finance.

AGRICULTURE

It must be the vigilant duty of the General Assembly and the Executive, working hand in hand, to foster the agricultural eminence of our prairie state, to co-operate with the Federal Government in control of floods and erosion, and in kindred problems. We must support the University of Illinois in its extension to the farmer of improved agricultural methods, but over and beyond all else we must think of the farm in terms of a living—a way of living and a place to live. Life on the farm in this age can and should be as attractive as urban life. I think we can well afford to give more thought to the amenities of life on the farm if we are to maintain the proud position of our basic industry, agriculture.

HOUSING AND RENT CONTROL

The outstanding paradox of our advanced age is the persistence of an acute shortage of one of the most elemental requirements of mankind—shelter—in the nation which beyond all others is the wealthiest, most productive and most resourceful.

It is not necessary to present statistics depicting the scope of the problem. It affects almost every community in the state, large or small. We know now that rural areas have their slums as well as do our larger urban centers. And we know the major part of the price we pay for our acute housing shortage is measured in the intangible but cruelly real terms of broken homes, moral deterioration, juvenile delinquency, cynicism and despair.

I have no magic formula to offer. I wish I did. It is clear that the problem is inherently one for private enterprise. And it is also clear that it cannot do the job at rentals or costs within the reach of those most in need. The combined resources of national, state and local governments are necessary for the solution of this problem. Presumably this Congress will enact leg-

islation along the lines of the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill which will provide the basis for an enlarged attack upon the problem. We must be receptive to new ideas and prepared to support the federal program with such legislation as is necessary.

However, there is one specific legislative change I would suggest. It is not a panacea, but legislation permitting more rapid acquisition of land for slum clearance and housing purposes should accelerate solution of the problem. Other states have had such legislation for many years. Ample provision can be made for the protection of property owners, and I urge you to consider legislation to this end.

One phase of the problem—the acute shortage of rental housing—requires a further word. Not only in Chicago, but throughout the state abnormal conditions prevail in the rental housing market. The continued existence of federal rent control has substantially alleviated the potential hardships. One important deficiency in federal rent control is its failure to provide for control of accommodations for non-transient occupants of hotels. The result has been that thousands of permanent residents of hotels have suffered rapid and often unwarranted rent increases.

The legislation enacted by the 65th General Assembly did not meet this problem. By its language no local controls can become effective until all federal control ceases. Hence local action to control this situation is impossible. But as the existing federal control terminates March 31, 1949, and an extension is probable, I presume you will wish to defer any action to remedy this situation pending determination of the federal course.

MINES AND MINERALS

The time has come, I believe, for you to give attention to the state's agency for discharging its responsibilities to those engaged in the mining and petroleum industries. The elements of good government are power and strict accountability for its exercise. I believe that in this light the organization of the Department of Mines and Minerals requires re-examination. In due course I will submit to you concrete proposals for its reorganization.

As there seems to be some ambiguity at present, I will also

urge you to extend the civil service to include most of the employees of this department. Moreover, our mining laws contain much that is obsolete, and I strongly urge that they be rewritten in their entirety. Agencies are at hand to assist in this work and I shall have more to say to you in this connection at a later date.

CONSERVATION

Our natural resources of forest and wild life are presently administered by an executive department headed by a Director appointed by the Governor. Some twenty-seven states have adopted the non-political commission form of administration of their comparable services. None of them has reverted to the method which we retain. I think Illinois in its quest for more efficient and economical public administration could well take the same progressive step.

STATE POLICE

Another highly specialized field of the state service which should be removed from political control is the Highway Maintenance Police. A public service charged not only with fearless and equal enforcement of the law but with the protection of human life itself demands character, discipline and undiluted loyalty. The men who undertake this responsible and exacting work are entitled to a merit system which insures them protection and recognition for their service without fear or favor. It has been done in other states and it can and should be done in Illinois if our first interest is the quality of our government.

PUBLIC UTILITY REGULATION

I invite your attention to the Illinois Commerce Commission. It is regulating public utilities whose rates and charges now exceed two billion dollars a year. The five men who comprise the Commission have vast power, authority and responsibility. Because of the enormous volume of its work, the technical character of its proceedings, and the tremendous importance of its decisions, the qualifications of the men who serve as Commissioners are not alone the concern of a Governor but of the public and the utility companies alike.

Under existing legislation the men who are charged with these responsibilities are appointed by the Governor to serve for a two-year term. Their annual compensation is \$7,500. In earlier years under the administrations of Governors Dunne and Lowden the approach toward this important agency was somewhat different. In those days members of what was then more aptly called the Public Utility Commission received \$10,000 a year and served for a term of six years. The terms of the Commissioners were staggered to insure continuity and independence.

The importance of the work of the Commission has not declined in the intervening years; rather it has increased. Yet the system in Illinois is hardly conducive to indifference to the caprices of political fortune, nor is the compensation compatible with the responsibilities of the office.

I believe that the public will be better served by a Commission whose independence and continuity is increased by lengthened and staggered terms of office. And I further believe that to attract to this vital public service the character of men it deserves the compensation must more adequately reflect its responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to limit my remarks severely I have omitted any reference to many other matters of grave concern—the veteran, higher education, public health. I will have something more to say to you later about these and other subjects, and doubtless you will have still more to say to me!

In conclusion, I hope I have made it clear that the State of Illinois appears to me to be well off financially at present, but that with just demands increasing rapidly, and with matching revenue at best doubtful, in the next biennium if not this one, we may well face acute difficulties.

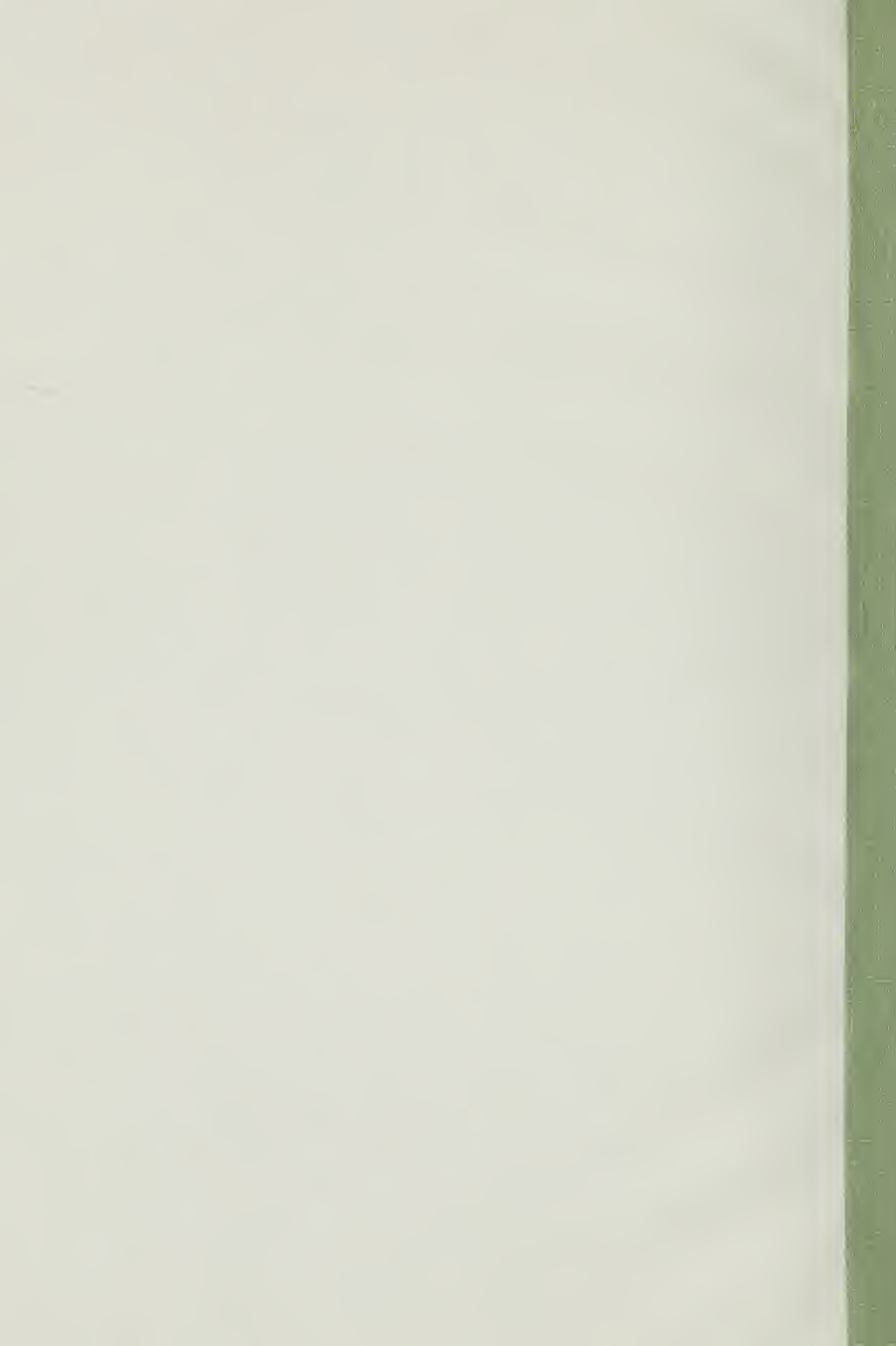
I hope I have made it clear that we should anticipate the future now, that I will have no reluctance to break boldly with the complacent, quiet past; that to match the relentless demands of these searching times for thrifty, efficient, honest government is the only desire of my colleagues and myself who have been so signally honored by our fellow citizens.

I hope I have made it clear that with sincere purpose, if limited talents, I want to execute your will, and serve my only ambition—to help to make of Illinois an example of the best in our democratic tradition, a leader in a noble future as it was in a noble past.

We Americans are proud that we were born of revolutionaries with a passionate faith in freedom and human worth.

We Illinoisans are proud that our state was born of simple folk who believed in an ever better future.

This is our inheritance. To preserve it, to enrich it in the great age that lies ahead we ask that God, in His infinite power for good, help us make of Illinois a land where justice, honesty and progress abound.





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